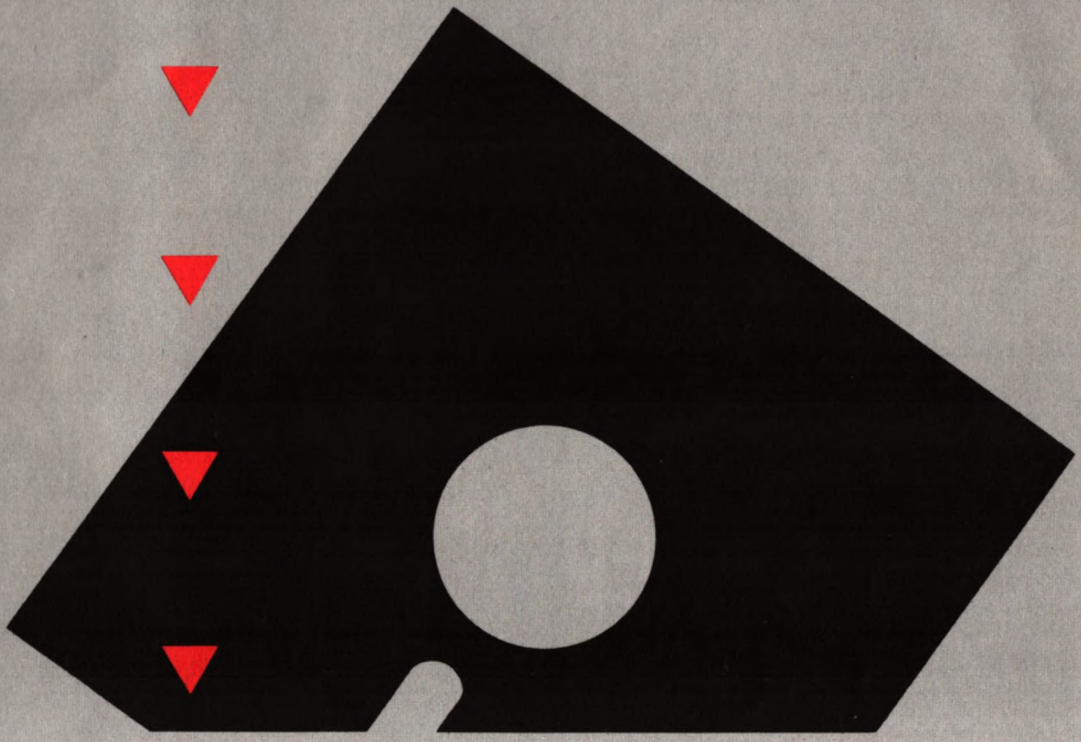
# Q-Link®

# Guide to Downloading Software



# DOWNLOADER's CHECKLIST:

Keep this Downloading Guide near your Commodore for help when you need to double-check the next step in the downloading process. For more information on downloading, loading, and running your programs, go to the Members' Online Guide in the Customer Service Center or to the help areas of the Commodore Information Network's Computing Support Groups and Software Libraries.

## I FORMAT A DISK

Before you can download a file, you must format a disk. Formatting the disk tells the drive where to write information; this allows you to receive and save downloaded programs. It also creates a directory of files you have saved to the disk (see "Displaying Your Disk Directory" below). Do not use your Q-Link® Program Disk to store files; downloading a file onto your Q-Link Program Disk could damage it. Rather, use a formatted disk.

**NOTE:** Formatting a used disk will ERASE all existing files on that disk. You only need to format a disk the first time you use it, unless you wish to erase a used disk so you can use it again.

**To format a disk:**

**1.** Turn on your computer, monitor and disk drive. If your machine is a C128, hold down the Commodore key so you will boot up in C64 mode.

**2.** Put the disk you wish to format in the drive and close the drive door.

**3.** Type:
OPEN15,8,15"NØ:diskname,id":CLOSE15
Don't leave any spaces in between characters. Then press the RETURN key.

**NOTE:** The "diskname" is the name you use to title your disk and can be up to 16 characters long. The "id" is the two character part of the name the computer uses to identify the disk. Use lowercase letters to name your file disks and different names for each to avoid confusion.

**4.** The flashing cursor will disappear while the drive formats the disk. The process takes about 70 seconds, and the screen will display the word "READY." The cursor will return when formatting is complete.

**5.** If the red light flashes on your disk drive, it means an error has occurred during formatting; check to make sure the drive door is closed and that the formatting command was typed correctly down to the exact character. Turn the drive off, then on again, to clear the incorrect command before retyping the line.

## II DOWNLOADING A FILE

Once you've formatted a disk, you're ready to get online and download a file. To do so:

**1.** Select the software library that contains the files in which you are interested. You will be given the option of viewing files by filename (listing of exact titles) or subject (listing of broad topic headings). Use the cursor key to move the check mark to make your choice, then press the F1 key to select the area you want.

**2.** Files are separated in the library by upload date for organizational purposes. Select date category from the menu of upload dates (the day and month the files were uploaded to the library) using the cursor key to move the check mark. Then press the F1 key to select.

**3.** Use the cursor to move the check mark to the specific file you want to download, then press the F1 key.

**4.** The download description of the file will include such information as the downloading time, additional files or equipment you might need, and the number of blocks (the amount of space the file will take up on your disk).

After reading the download description, press the F7 key for the download menu. You will have the option of reading comments about the file, which will give you hints from other Q-Link® members on downloading and using the file.

Write this information down, or you can save file descriptions and comments onto a disk by removing your Program disk, inserting a formatted disk into your drive and, pressing the F3 key after naming the file using lowercase letters. You will not be disconnected during the download, even though you have removed the Q-Link Program Disk temporarily.

**NOTE:** It will be easier to find these descriptions on your disk if you name them in a way that identifies them as such. For instance, if you name your descriptions ".filename," you can instantly recognize them for what they are. You can read these saved files by loading "UTILITY," 8 on your Version 2 disk or by loading "SPRINT," 8 on your Version 3 or 4 disk. See "Using Program Files" below for more information.

**5.** Select the "Download This File" option and follow the screen prompts, which will tell you when to insert a formatted disk. The selected program will be downloaded onto the disk.

**6.** When the download is complete, the screen will display a message announcing that the file has been copied to your disk. If you have Version 3 or 4 of the Program Disk, a bell will ring.

**7.** Remove the download disk and put your Q-Link Program Disk back in the drive. Press the F5 key to back out of the download area.

## DISPLAYING YOUR DISK DIRECTORY

In order to use your downloaded files, you must first sign off Q-Link and run your programs. Now that you're offline, here's how you display your disk directory:

**1.** Type: LOAD "$",8 then press the RETURN key. The computer will take a few seconds to load the disk.

**2.** When the flashing cursor reappears, type: LIST and press the RETURN key. The diskname, id, filenames, number of blocks used by each file, and number of blocks free on that disk will then be displayed.

## USING PROGRAM FILES

**1.** First, review the file descriptions and comments for the file you downloaded. Reading them will give you instructions for loading and running the program.

Comments from fellow Q-Linker's can be accessed and saved on file as described above in "Downloading a File". Downloadable Q-Link files are one of two types: Program (PRG) files and Sequential (SEQ) files. The file description will tell you which one and whether you need another file to read it.

**2.** For PRG files:
You can run your program files using one of the two most commonly used LOAD commands: Type: LOAD "filename",8 and press the RETURN key, then type RUN and press the RETURN key.

Or, type: LOAD "filename",8,1 and press the RETURN key, then type RUN and press the RETURN key.

For SEQ files:
These files are either text files that require a sequential reader, or files that have been altered to make uploading and downloading easier. They must be loaded differently than PRG files.

**3.** If you have a Version 2 Program Disk, load the "UTILITY" function on that disk first, typing: Load "UTILITY", 8 and pressing the RETURN key. Then follow screen instructions to view your main program.

Or, if you have Version 3 or 4 of the Q-Link® Program Disk, load the SPRINT reader from your Program Disk by typing: Load "SPRINT", 8 and pressing the RETURN key.
Then follow screen instructions to view your main program.
The SPRINT utility may also be found in the Features section of News and Information under Auditorium Archives.

**NOTE:** Turning the computer off before and after each attempt will "clear" the old or incorrect commands. Disconnecting the peripherals (when the power is off) could also help, because modems, printers and other add-ons may cause programs to load or run improperly.

# TROUBLESHOOTING: A FEW TIPS

If you run into trouble downloading, post a message on the message board or at the Downloading Help Desk in the CIN Software Libraries. Your downloading and software questions will be researched and answered by the librarian.

## Simple Troubleshooting Hints:

**1. BEFORE DOWNLOADING:** If you receive a disk error message on your screen, the disk may not be formatted, or the file you wish to download will not fit on the disk you are using because there are not enough blocks free. You can clear the message by pressing the F5 key. Then you must turn off the disk drive and turn it on again to reset it. Then press the RETURN key to continue the downloading process. Keep extra formatted disks on hand in case the first disk doesn't have enough room.

**2. WHILE DOWNLOADING:** Downloading speed can vary for a variety of reasons (you can find out the download time in the file description). One explanation for slow downloading is that the access number you're using may be experiencing heavy usage at that time, increasing the time it takes to carry information over the phone. You might try changing access numbers. To do so, check "Access Numbers" in the Members' Online Guide in the Customer Service Center.

Other factors that can increase download time are noise on the telephone line which may cause Q-Link to resend information. To avoid this problem, disconnect peripherals connected to the drive or unplug all answering machine or cordless phone on your line.

If you discover any useful tips for downloading and running a specific file, please go back to the file's download menu in the Software Libraries, choose Post Comments on This File, and leave your suggestions for others!

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